

Santosh satisfied with his Dakar showing

'Desert Storm will be tough and reaching the podium will be a challenge'

S. DIPAK RAGAV
CHENNAI

After taking part in another gruelling Dakar rally early in the year, C.S. Santosh is currently competing in the Desert Storm in Rajasthan. He talks about his career, his Dakar outings and more. *Excerpts:*

On your best finish at Dakar. Talk us through the difference between 2015 and 2018 campaigns.

2015 was one of the most crucial years of my life, a turning point in my career. I participated in the Dakar Rally; the first Indian to do so, and then going on to finish it on my very first attempt was indeed special. So it was

great on many fronts.

This year, in 2018, my aim was to be competitive and challenge the best in the world. I achieved that goal twice with stage times in the top 15 and then in the top 20. This was a very difficult Dakar and I made it all the way to finish 35th overall despite my share of troubles.

Your preparations for Desert Storm 2018

Desert Storm is one of my favourite rallies in India and I look forward to it every year. This year I'm working towards improving my speed. The competition, which includes international riders, as also stepped up this year.



Priority: C.S. Santosh says his aim this year is to be competitive and challenge the best. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

So it will be tough and to reach the podium a challenge. Our entire team at Hero MotoSports is working towards it.

Can you talk about the challenge and the adrenaline of racing a clock than competitors?

Racing the clock is unique as

you battle against yourself. Racing for over five days or two weeks takes a lot of concentration and effort, to be able to sustain speed and performance every single day.

What are the areas that you can improve?

My training is well rounded and I train on and off the bike. I try and ride as much as I can during the week. I'm always assessing the areas that I need to improve upon and then work on it. It's a never-ending process. I try to bridge the gap with my competition since most guys I race against started out at a very young age.